

Message Text

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64

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 EB-11 SIL-01 LAB-06 COME-00

IGA-02 AID-20 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-15 USIA-15 PC-15 MC-02 CU-04 SCI-06 EA-11 RSR-01

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R 081505Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6076

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSYIBATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

CINCPAC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 9234

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UK, US

SUBJ: MORE WARMTH IN INDO-US RELATIONS

BEGIN SUMMARY: INDIAN OFFICIALS FROM THE PRIME MINISTER ON DOWN
HAVE IN RECENT WEEKS PUBLICLY EXPRESSED DESIRE TO IMPROVE
RELATIONS WITH THE US. SOME HAVE GONE OUT OF THEIR WAY TO
DEFLECT CRITICISM OF THE US IN PARLIAMENT AND IN CONGRESS
PARTY POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS. A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC STEPS HAVE
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BEEN TAKEN BY THE GOI TO RESUME EXCHANGES AND CONTACTS WHICH
HAD LAPSED. RUPEE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE GOTTEN OFF TO A GOOD
START AND OUR WILLINGNESS TO ACHIEVE A SETTLEMENT HAS
RECEIVED FACORABLE PRESS COMMENT. IN SUM, IT APPEARS THAT OUR

DESIRE TO HAVE CORRECT RELATIONS ON THE PUBLIC LEVEL AND TO DISCUSS OUR DIFFERENCES IN PRIVATE MEETINGS IS NOW BEING RECIPROCATED BY THE INDIANS. THIS IS A POSITIVE EXAMPLE OF THE "NEW REALISM" IN OUR RELATIONS, BUT IT COULD, OF COURSE, VANISH AS QUICKLY AS IT HAS APPEARED. END SUMMARY

1. THE CLIMATE OF INDO-US RELATIONS HAS BEEN FURTHER IMPROVED RECENTLY BY THREE GENERAL INDIAN POSTURES, ALL WE ASSUME REFLECTING DIVISIONS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL: A) PUBLIC STATEMENTS THAT INDIA DESIRES TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US, B) DEFLECTION OF PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENTARY CRITICISM OF THE US, AND C) THE RESUMPTION OF VARIOUS EXCHANGES AND CONTACTS WHICH HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO LAPSE. SOME OF THESE INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY MRS GANDHI HERSELF AND SOME BY LESSER OFFICIALS, BUT IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE GOI HAS DECIDED AT THE POLICY LEVEL NOT ONLY TO TAKE STEPS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE US, BUT TO SIGNAL THIS WIDELY WITHIN THE BUREAUCRACY AND TO THE PUBLIC AT LARGE.

2. IN LATE JULY, MRS GANDHI TOLD A GROUP OF YOUNG AMERICANS IN A CONVERSATION WIDELY REPORTED IN THE PRESS THAT THE US DID NOT ALWAYS UNDERSTAND INDIAN POINTS OF VIEW, BUT RELATIONS WERE FRIENDLY AND BOTH COUNTRIES WERE WORKING HARD TO DISPEL MISUNDERSTANDINGS. ON AUGUST 7 SHE REPORTEDLY HEADED OFF PRESSURE WITHIN THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY PARTY TO EXPRESS FORMAL REGRET OVER THE ACCIDENTAL US BOMBING OF A CAMBODIAN TOWN (NEW DELHI 9180). (THIS ATTITUDE IS IN STRIKING CONTRAST TO HER PUBLIC COMMENTS ON BOMBING MADE AT THE ONE ASIA ASSEMBLY SIX MONTHS AGO.)

3. THE NEW TREND HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY EVIDENT IN PARLIAMENT. THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, SURENDRA PAL SINGH, HAS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS SQUELCHED QUESTIONERS WHO SOUGHT TO BRING UP QUESTIONS OF CIA ACTIVITY IN INDIA AND OTHER TYPICAL CRITICISMS OF THE US. HE HAS ALSO SPOKEN OF THE IMPROVEMENT IN INDO-US RELATIONS AND OF "CONTINUOUS DIALOGUE" NOW IN PROCESS WITH VIEW TO IMPROVING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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RELATIONS STILL FURTHER. ON AUGUST 2 HE SAID A STATEMENT MADE IN MAY BY CONGRESS PARTY PRESIDENT SHARMA ABOUT A US PLAN TO "TAKE REVENGE ON INDIA" AFTER THE FAILURE OF US POLICIES IN 1971 WAS "NOT CORRECT". A COPY OF THIS PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION AND ANSWER WAS POINTEDLY SENT TO THE CHARGE BY AN MEA OFFICIAL THE SAME DAY.

4. INDIAN SENSITIVITY TO US STORIES ON INDIA'S INGRATITUDE FOR US AID WAS GIVEN UNUSUAL DISPLAY WHEN, IN LATE JULY, MEA CALLED IN AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS FOR A SPECIFIC BRIEFING TO EXPRESS INDIA'S APPRECIATION FOR PAST US ECONOMIC AID, NOTING THAT STORIES IN THE US PRESS HAD MADE INDIA APPEAR

TO BE UNGRATEFUL. (NEA DELHI 8580)

5. WE HAVE FOUND INDIANS INCREASINGLY RELAXED AND NON-BEL-LIGERENT IN PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS AND MORE OPEN IN SEEKING DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE US. THIS IS PARTICULARLY NOTICEABLE AMONG TRADE UNION LEADERS WHO FOR THE FIRST TIME OPENLY SAY THEY WANT TO "CONSOLIDATE AND EXPAND" RELATIONS WITH US TRADE UNIONS.

6. THESE ATMOSPHERIC CHANGES HAVE ALSO BEEN REFLECTED IN MORE CONCRETE WAYS. THE RUPEE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE GOTTEN OFF TO A GOOD START, WITH INDIAN OFFICIALS AT THE WORKING LEVEL SHOWING A COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE IN SESSIONS DEVOTED TO EXCHANGING DATA ON SPECIFIC ISSUES. THE PRESS HAS WRITTEN FAVORABLY OF US WILLINGNESS TO ACHIEVE A SOLUTION WHICH WRITES OFF GOOD PORTION OF THE RUPEE BALANCES.

7. THE GOI HAS JUST REQUESTED A PROGRAM FOR PEACECOPRS PARTICIPATION IN THE PUNJAB DAIRY PROGRAM, A STEP WHICH BREAKS DEADLOCK OF MANY MONTHS IN OBTAINING AN OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT VIEW OF THE FUTURE OF THE PEACE COPRS IN INDIA. THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE HAS AGREED TO UTILIZE TWO MILITARY TRAINING ASSIGNMENTS IN THE US, THE FIRST TIME THIS HAS HAPPENED IN ALMOST TWO YEARS, AND WILL ALSO SEND AN OFFICER TO NURAL COMMAND COLLEGE THIS FALL. NEGOTIATIONS TO PURCHASE COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT (PEACE INDIGO) ARE PROCEEDING WELL, AND THE INDIAN NAVY IS NEGOTIATING IN WASHINGTON FOR A \$250,000 FOREIGN MILITARY SALES CONTRACT (THE FIRST OCCASION SINCE THE 1971 EMBARGO). THE INDIAN MILITARY ATTACHE HAS ASKED FOR A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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RESUMPTION OF THE EXCHANGE OF MAPS WHICH LAPSED ABOUT A YEAR AGO.

8. WE DO NOT WANT TO SUGGEST EVERYTHING IS SWEETNESS AND LIGHT. THERE HAVE BEEN THREE EXAMPLES OF UNCOOPERATIVE INDIAN ATTITUDES IN THE EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC FIELDS. A) A MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OFFICIAL HAS ASKED FOR COMMENT FROM BOARD MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN STUDIES RESEARCH CENTRE IN HYDERABAD ON A PROPOSAL TO MERGE THE CENTRE WITH OSMANIA UNIVERSITY, A STEP WHICH WOULD VITIATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS IF CARRIED OUT. B) THE MINISTRY HAS ALSO TAKEN STEPS TO CHECK ON THE DONATION OF BOOKS TO INDIAN LIBRARIES BY FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS. THIS COULD IMPAIR THE USIS PROGRAM TO SEND REPRESENTATIVE COLLECTIONS OF BOOKS TO SOME 160 LIBRARIES. C) FINALLY, EMBASSY OFFICIALS WORKING WITH GOI OFFICIALS TO PLAN A PUGWASH CONFERENCE ON SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE HAVE FOUND THEM RELUCTANT TO PERMIT ANY PUBLICITY FOR THE AFFAIR AND AFRAID TO HAVE ANY SUBJECT ON THE AGENDA WHICH MIGHT BE CONTROVERSIAL.

9. COMMENT: THE EVENTS NOTED ABOVE ARE JUST THAT: EVENTS.

THEY OCCURRED. WE HAVE NOT THE LEAST NOTION WHETHER THEY WILL RECUR. WE WOULD ONLY NOTE THAT THEY OCCURRED IN THE FIRST INSTANCE ALMOST WHOLLY AS INDIAN INITIATIVES. WE HAVE BEEN JUST THIS SIDE OF CHILLY WITH RESPECT TO ENCOURAGING THEM TO ASK FOR OR ACCEPT ANYTHING. OUR GENERAL POSTURE HAS BEEN THAT IF THEY DON'T WANT WHATEVER IT IS THEY MAY BE SURE THE CHINESE DO, OR THAT MAYBE BREZHNEV HAS ALREADY CONTRACTED FOR IT ANYWAY.

MOYNIHAN

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COLOMBO
DACCA
BOMBAY
CALCUTTA

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